

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 11826 261833Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
/066 W

-----046607 270114Z /63

R 261745Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3816
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TRIESTE
AMCONSUL TURIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 11826

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI'S COMMENTS ON PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS

1. DURING MY CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI JUNE 23,
I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN HIS VIEWS ON HOW THE
FORTHCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS MAY COME OUT. AS
A SENIOR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (DC) LEADER, FORLANI IS
AN INTERESTED PARTICIPANT IN THE ELECTION PROCESS.
SHOULD ZACCAGNINI BE ELECTED, FOR EXAMPLE, FORLANI WOULD
BE A LEADING CANDIDATE TO REPLACE HIM AS PARTY SECRETARY.

2. FORLANI DESCRIBED THE PRESENT SITUATION AS UNCERTAIN,
COMPLICATED BY SOCIALIST LEADER CRAXI'S INSISTENCE ON
ELECTION OF A PSI CANDIDATE. THE PSI HAD THREE CANDIDATES--
BOBBIO, GIOLITTI AND DE MARTINO (THE LATTER FORLANI
DESCRIBED AS FAVORED BY THE PCI). IN RESPONSE TO MY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 11826 261833Z

QUESTION, FORLANI SAID HE BELIEVED CRAXI WAS SERIOUS IN
WANTING A PSI PRESIDENT ELECTED. THE PSI STANCE HAD
MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FOR ZACCAGNINI
(WHO FORLANI DESCRIBED AS THE "DC'S CANDIDATE"). THIS
IS BECAUSE TO THE LAY PARTIES ZACCAGNINI'S CANDIDACY
LOOKED LIKE THE PRODUCT OF A SECRET AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE DC AND PCI. FORLANI SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT

NO SUCH SECRET UNDERSTANDING EXISTS. HOWEVER, IN POLITICS, HE SAID, "APPEARANCES ARE OFTEN AS IMPORTANT AS REALITY." ANDREOTTI MUST ALSO BE CONSIDERED A DC CANDIDATE, FORLANI SAID. HE MADE CLEAR, HOWEVER, HIS VIEW THAT THE DC WOULD BE BEST SERVED IF ANDREOTTI REMAINED AS PRIME MINISTER WHERE HIS TALENTS WERE MOST NEEDED. FORLANI INTERESTINGLY NEVER MENTIONED HIS FORMER MENTOR, FANFANI, AS A POSSIBLE DC CANDIDATE.

3. FORLANI THEN RECOUNTED THE POSITION HE HAD TAKEN IN THE DC DIRECTORATE MEETING ON JUNE 20. IN RESPONSE TO DEMANDS BY THE PSI AND LAY PARTIES FOR A LAY PRESIDENT, FORLANI SAID THE DC SHOULD NOT CONSIDER THE ELECTION OF A SUITABLE LAY PRESIDENT AS "CATASTROPHIC." WITH THE EXCEPTION OF "SOME DELICATE PERIODS," THE PRESIDENCY, AFTER ALL, IS PRIMARILY CEREMONIAL IN CHARACTER. THERE WAS NO REASON WHY THE DC SHOULDN'T ACCEPT A "GOOD" LAY CANDIDATE. MOREOVER, THE DC'S SUPPORT FOR A LAY CANDIDATE WOULD ALSO HAVE THE MERIT OF RECONSTRUCTING THE DC'S POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LAY PARTIES.

4. ASKED WHICH LAY CANDIDATE THE DC MIGHT PREFER, FORLANI SAID THAT THE DC COULD ACCEPT EITHER REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT LA MALFA OR THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT, PAOLO ROSSI, WHO HAS TIES TO THE PSDI. LA MALFA HAD THE "DISADVANTAGE" FROM THE DC'S POINT OF VIEW, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 11826 261833Z

OF BEING MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PCI. OF THE TWO, THE DC WOULD THEREFORE PROBABLY PREFER ROSSI, A MAN OF GREAT INTELLECTUAL COURAGE AND HONESTY. UNFORTUNATELY, FORLANI SAID, BOTH LA MALFA AND ROSSI AT 75 AND 78 WERE WELL ALONG IN YEARS. ALTHOUGH THEIR AGE WOULD NOT PRECLUDE THEIR ELECTION, FORLANI NOTED THAT TRAVELING ABROAD ON STATE VISITS WAS ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS OF AN ITALIAN PRESIDENT, PARTICULARLY IN MAINTAINING TIES WITH ITALY'S LARGE OVERSEAS COMMUNITIES.

5. COMMENT: AS FORLANI AND OTHERS HAVE OBSERVED, THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST IS COMPLEX AND IS LIKELY TO BE LENGTHY. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE RASH TO ENGAGE IN PREDICTIONS. HOWEVER, THE DC'S INABILITY TO MOLD A PRE-ELECTION CONSENSUS IN FAVOR OF A DC CANDIDATE HAS IMPROVED THE CHANCES OF LAY CANDIDATES. THIS MEANS THAT DESPITE THEIR ADVANCED AGE, CANDIDATES SUCH AS LA MALFA AND ROSSI ARE BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY. WHILE LA MALFA IS WELL KNOWN TO WASHINGTON, ROSSI MAY BE LESS SO. BASED ON MY PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH PAOLO ROSSI, I WOULD COMMENT THAT HE IS A MAN OF IMPRESSIVE INTELLECTUAL VIGOR. JUST AS ROSSI WAS OUTSPOKEN ANTI-

FASCIST IN THIRTIES, HE IS STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST
AND DEEPLY COMMITTED TO DEMOCRATIC VALUES.GARDNER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ROME11826
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780265-0616
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780620/aaaaaraz.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0413ee7f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2209080
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI'S COMMENTS ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
TAGS: PINT, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0413ee7f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014